



THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

In February 1997, the AFL-CIO Executive Council adopted a policy statement concerning negotiations for an amendment of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (the Rio Treaty). That statement urged that the "United States insist upon the incorporation of appropriate commitments from all nations to reduce carbon emissions; and seek a reduction schedule compatible with the urgent need to avoid unfair and unnecessary job loss in developed economies. The President should not accept and the Congress should not ratify any amendment or protocol that does not meet these standards."

In July 1997, the U.S. Senate passed S. Res. 98 by a vote of 95-0. S. Res. 98 expressed the sense of the Senate that the "United States should not be a signatory to any protocol . . . which would

(A) mandate new commitments to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Annex I parties, unless the protocol . . . also mandates new specific scheduled commitments to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions for Developing Country Parties within the same compliance period, or

(B) would result in serious harm to the economy of the United States . . ."

In September 1997, at our Twenty-Second Convention, the delegates affirmed that the AFL-CIO "is fully engaged in debate, discussion and negotiation on the complex issue of global climate change. Our objectives are: assuring global environmental repair of the carbon dioxide concentration problem with the formal participation of the entire international community committed to a mutually agreed upon, binding solution; protecting the industrial base of the United States with no movement of jobs or pollution to other countries because of perverse incentives as a result of a flawed international agreement; and providing a just transition for American workers so that no American worker loses economic ground in our pursuit of more sustainable and environment-positive global practices."

In October 1997, President Clinton outlined the U.S. negotiating position for the December meeting in Kyoto, Japan. The President called for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2008-2012, but said that "the United States will not assume binding obligations unless key developing nations meaningfully participate in this effort."

The Kyoto Protocol, negotiated in December 1997, calls upon the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2008-2012, but it imposes no requirements for developing nations to limit, reduce or make any commitments regarding their emission levels.

Numerous economic analyses, including studies conducted by the Clinton Administration, have concluded that unilateral action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels can have serious adverse economic consequences for workers. The Clinton Administration released a study in July 1997 to the House Commerce Committee that showed stabilization at 1990 levels by 2010, in the absence of any action by developing countries, would cost 900,000 jobs by 2005. Other studies have concluded that such policies could result in the loss of over 1.5 million jobs by 2005. Reductions at 7 percent below 1990 levels would be more difficult to meet and could mean even greater job loss.

The draft Kyoto Protocol fails to meet the standards for a treaty as set forth and adopted unanimously by the AFL-CIO Executive Council's 1997 resolution and our Convention statement. It fails the tests expressed unanimously by the U.S. Senate in S. Res 98. Further, the proposed Kyoto Protocol fails to meet the objectives set by President Clinton in announcing the U.S. negotiating position.

The AFL-CIO Executive Council therefore calls upon the President to refrain from signing the proposed Kyoto Protocol to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. Instead, we urge the President to lead a serious conversation with the American people in which he presents the legislative and regulatory plans, expected economic effects and projected environmental outcomes that his administration anticipates as a result of implementing their current strategy.

The AFL-CIO Executive Council also reaffirms its commitment to pursue, with allies, rational, achievable solutions to climate change threats that both solve the global problem and protect the economic interests of American workers and their communities.

SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH STRATEGIES

Greenhouse-gas treaty has small businesses stewing

World leaders, led by U.S. policymakers, are negotiating an international treaty that would require nations to make reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide.

Even though the environmental and economic implications of such a policy are enormous, few Americans are aware that the United States is moving to support such a treaty.

"Before the U.S. commits its citizens to a bleak future through international treaties, there should be open debate and further research not only on global warming, but on the effect of these policies on consumers," said Frances Smith, executive director for Consumer Alert.

Reducing carbon dioxide means burning less oil, gas and coal. Such a policy could dramatically affect every industry in America — both big and small — and affect the lifestyle of every American.

For America's small businesses, the treaty could be especially harsh. Energy-intensive operations such as bakeries, dry cleaners, auto repair shops, small manufacturers and, ironically, recycling businesses would be immediately hit.

Based on options already considered by our government, small businesses would be forced to operate much smaller, less useful vehicles, pay higher gas taxes and a new carbon tax, all while coping with a slew of additional regulatory mandates.

Carbon dioxide is an essential part of the natural process and should not be confused with harmful smog and other pollutants.

Only 2 percent of so-called greenhouse gases are manmade.

For the reason that it is a natural byproduct, carbon dioxide reductions are not easily achieved through technological advances such as those that have so dramatically reduced

smog emission.

Any effort to reduce carbon dioxide will require drastically decreasing energy consumption. That's the rub. Although there's no debate that carbon-dioxide concentrations have been accumulating in the atmosphere, the jury is still out on whether these gases are warming our planet — or how fast.

During the past 40 years, a period when manmade carbon-dioxide emission increased significantly, satellite measurements of global temperature show little if any increase, despite reports to the contrary.

Currently, there is no scientific consensus regarding global warming. Respected scientists fall on both sides of the debate. Though Clinton administration officials denied they would

break with a past policy of supporting only voluntary restrictions to meet emission targets, U.S. Undersecretary of State Timothy Wirth abandoned that policy at a July 1996 Geneva meeting of world leaders.

According to Wirth, "The science calls upon us to take urgent action. We believe that circumstances warrant the adoption of realistic but binding targets."

The binding nature of the agreement would be particularly costly and burdensome for American business, asserts the Center for the Study of American Business. An international agency would be established and given "the power to punish businesses, governments, and other organizations that fail to meet the targets."

With the draft protocol pushing for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels, Yale University economist William Norhaus estimated the proposal will cost the economy a staggering \$7 trillion. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has considered various taxes, ranging from \$125 to \$355 per metric ton of carbon emissions, as a way to discourage businesses from using energy.

According to the calculations of Lawrence Horwitz, of the economic consulting firm DRI/McGraw, a \$200 carbon tax would cost the economy \$350 billion a year or 4.2 percent of its gross domestic product.

Domestic job losses would average 1.1 million a year over 15 years. That

figure has stunned businesses and workers alike. United Mine Workers of America President Cecil Roberts said that the treaty turned from an environmental debate to a trade and jobs debate because America would be required to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions, while nations such as China, Korea, Mexico and India would be exempt.

"The result: no meaningful environmental improvement, but a significant cost to American workers and consumers," said Roberts in a Feb. 5 statement.

Countries already enjoying lower labor and production costs would instantly receive another competitive edge because of their exemption from the treaty.

The Center for the Study of American Business is calling on Congress to begin an intensive review of the sudden shift in U.S. policy. According to the center, the international treaty "is likely to have more widespread effects on the people and the economy of the U.S. than many of the issues that now occupy a more central stage in Washington. Congress should act now before international agreements become set in the stone of international law."

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LEGISLATIVE
ISSUES

KAREN
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FARM BUREAU

Should Congress and the Administration now agree to internationally established, enforceable caps on greenhouse gases?

Background:

There is concern by some scientists that "greenhouse gas" emissions from human activities are causing increases in average global temperatures and adverse changes in the world's climate and weather. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane.

The global climate change theory is controversial. Although the scientific body of the United Nations recently agreed that human activities appear to have a measurable effect on global temperatures, there is disagreement on the magnitude of what effect greenhouse gases play and the relative contribution of human versus natural causes.

Controversy notwithstanding, the White House and the U.S. Department of State have agreed to legally binding, numerical limits on greenhouse gases prescribed by an international treaty with about 160 nations.

Treaty History:

In 1992, government leaders from more than one hundred nations signed an agreement known as the Framework Convention on Climate Change which calls for voluntary, non-binding measures to limit greenhouse gases. The agreement, also known as the "Rio Treaty" was ratified by the U.S. Senate.

In 1996, in Geneva Switzerland parties to the agreement took a dramatic new tack and committed to establishing mandatory, legally binding caps on greenhouse gases. It was also agreed that these new limits would apply only to "developed" countries and will not apply to developing nations such as China, Mexico or South Korea. Developed countries comprise only about 30 of the 160 nations which are parties to the treaty.

A United Nations scientific body attributes more than 20 percent of all human caused greenhouse gases to agricultural production. Included in its regulatory proposals are new taxes on fossil fuels and fertilizer, prescribed changes in cultivation practices and restrictions on amounts of production for some crops and livestock.



Hot, global or not

Heat may or may not be a harbinger

by **Don Russell**

Daily News Staff Writer

Congratulations, you made it through the first heat wave of 1998 — a relatively dinky affair that should wrap up today with a fourth day of 90-degree temps.

Now, get ready for a sun-baked, hell-on-earth, drought-and-pestilence environment known as global warming — maybe.

This week's soaring temperatures, and those that still plague the Southwest part of the country, are just a taste of life in the greenhouse, some scientists say.

We're talking torrential thunderstorms followed by months of rainless skies, hoards of filthy bugs whose eggs survive mild winters, tropical diseases in modern cities, ruined crops, inflated energy costs, a sagging economy.

The long-term effects of global warming may be 50 or 100 years away, but some climate experts say weather binges like this week's heat wave is evidence the doom is nearing.

Last week, Vice President Al Gore declared that a government report revealing that June had been the hottest month in recorded history was proof of global warming.

This followed the unsettling news that 1997 was the warmest year ever.

And that nine of the last 11 years have been among the hottest on record.

But hold on.

This week's heat wave was nothing unusual, according to John Nese, meteorologist at the Franklin Institute.

"This heat wave is sort of overblown," Nese said. "It's like we've never had a heat wave in Philadelphia."

Yes, four consecutive 90-plus days are a bit warm, he noted, but on average the city sweats through 20 to 25 of them every year.

"Have people forgotten the summer of '95?" Nese wondered. "I remember it. I was living in a house with no air conditioning. In 25 days, from July 12th to August 5th, we had 24 days where the high temperature was 90 or above. The only day it didn't reach 90, it hit 89."

Yes, it reached a high of 91 degrees yesterday — but that's well below the city's all-time record of 106 degrees, set 70 years ago, in an age when greenhouse gases were hardly a concern.

Don't misunderstand Nese: He's not bucking the vast majority of climatologists who agree that the earth is getting warmer.

"It's just that there's no way to directly link global warming — assuming it's occurring, which is not a closed issue — to the weather we're experiencing this week," Nese said.

Nonetheless, the searing days of heat and humidity are a harbinger of what may be ahead.

Warning of floods, drought and rising seas, President Clinton has already committed the federal government to spend \$6.3 billion to combat global warming, through tax breaks for homeowners, car buyers and businesses.

The proposal followed last year's Kyoto international agreement in which the nations of the world agreed to reduce greenhouse gasses.

Meanwhile, the Philadelphia-based Pew Charitable Trusts has anted up \$5 million for the new Center on Global Climate Change.

The organization is bringing together a number of Fortune 500 companies to study and educate the public on ways to reduce greenhouse gasses, such as carbon dioxide and methane produced by cars and factories.

Send e-mail to russeld@phillynews.com or call our tip line at 215-854-5474.

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Dancing Around a Dilemma

Global warming promises to become a large and gushing source of national hypocrisy

By Robert J. Samuelson

Global warming may or may not be the great environmental crisis of the next century, but -- regardless of whether it is or isn't -- we won't do much about it. We will (I am sure) argue ferociously over it and may even, as a nation, make some fairly solemn-sounding commitments to avoid it. But the more dramatic and meaningful these commitments seem, the less likely they are to be observed. Little will be done. I wouldn't stake my life on that, but I don't see how it could turn out otherwise.

Democracies can't easily make present sacrifices to avoid future menaces. We require (it seems) a clear and present danger, if not a crisis, to stir us to action. This is why we won't soon mobilize against global warming. The politics simply won't compute. To do something effective would require a heavy energy tax or its equivalent. A good round figure for a tax is \$100 per ton of carbon; this would raise gasoline prices an estimated 26 cents a gallon and electricity and natural-gas rates by almost 30 percent. The idea would be to dampen energy use and the emission of greenhouse gases (mostly carbon dioxide) from the burning of fossil fuels (oil, coal, gas).

To put it mildly, the odds of Congress's passing such a tax are low. The problem with global warming is that we don't know yet whether it represents a genuine national threat and, if so, how large. Congress might conceivably react to a legitimate threat, even if distant. But it won't impose pain on voters for no obvious gain to solve a hypothetical problem. And if the United States won't, neither will anyone else. We generate the most greenhouse gases, about 22 percent of the annual total. Other countries won't squeeze themselves to preserve our lifestyles.

I talked last week to global-warming believers and skeptics. Despite policy differences, they tend to agree about the modest state of current knowledge. Here's what we know. Since the dawn of the Industrial Age (say 1800), the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has risen about 30 percent. In the past century, average surface temperatures have increased one degree Fahrenheit (.5 degree Celsius). The widespread suspicion is that these trends are connected. Industrial and transportation emissions increased carbon dioxide, trapping more heat in the atmosphere and raising temperatures. The rival theory is that the small temperature rise is a natural climatic variation.